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### Federal highway funding in jeopardy

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By Jim Edwards, Fox 11 News

The state of Arizona stands to lose \$228 million in federal funding for roads and an estimated 8,000 related jobs in the next fiscal year according to the Arizona Department of Transportation. Nationally the federal Highway Trust Fund is expected to incur a \$3.3 billion deficit in the 2009 fiscal year. The shortfall could result in a 34% drop in funding to states for road projects.

“Arizona is facing a transportation funding crisis that requires a shift in the way we think about growth and an innovative approach to invest in our future,” said ADOT Director Victor Mendez. “We are at a funding crossroads and must take action now to address our most critical transportation needs.”

Over the last six months ADOT has put together a Statewide Transportation Investment Strategy regarding the state’s future transportation needs. The strategy includes a combination of highways, rail, public transportation, elements to support walkable/bikeable communities, and funding for local governments’ transportation projects.

Money from the Highway Trust Fund is generated mainly by gas taxes. Congress is considering a proposal for a one-time funding fix for 2009, but how the program would be funded after that is unknown.